



GUIDELINES FOR SCHOOL
BASED OBSERVATION OF SPECIAL
EDUCATION CLASSROOMS

Approved, OSC, April 23, 2010

MARIN SPECIAL EDUCATION LOCAL PLAN AREA

GUIDELINES FOR SCHOOL BASED OBSERVATION OF SPECIAL EDUCATION CLASSROOMS

General Policies:

- It is the policy of the SELPA to limit outside observations of school based programs for the following reasons:
 1. Confidentiality.
 2. Impact on the learning environment.
 3. Time away from task by staff.
 4. Additional stressors in the learning environment.
 5. School safety.
- Individuals requesting an observation shall conform to the policies and procedures of the host district. Generally, all observations are scheduled in advance, with the reason for the observation, qualification (position) of the person making the observation, and specific standardized observational measures to be used (if any) shared with the school contact person or administrator. For pupils with disabilities, the District Director of Special Education shall have the authority to grant/deny requests. By knowing the specifics of the observation, school staff can schedule the observation at a time when student issues, concerns can most likely be seen.
- All observations are hosted by a district staff person. The district staff person shall escort the individual(s) who requested the observation and shall also make observational notes of the visitation. District staff may limit the number of persons allowed in the classroom and may limit the number of visitations.

Limitations:

- Observation is for a specific pupil, and information about other children cannot be shared, nor used as a basis for placement, diagnosis, or imperative data specific to other children.
- Specific areas of concern that form the basis for the observation must be shared with the school administrator or school contact person prior to the observation. If a specific standardized observation measure is to be used, the name of the test must be shared along with documentation by the parent authorizing use of the testing instrument/observational checklist.
- Generally, observations are for 30 minutes.
- In no way may the observation of a specific child be used as an evaluation of a credentialed staff person, teacher, or other professional. All evaluations are subject to district policies. In the event an observer has any comments regarding the performance of any staff person, either positive or negative, this information shall not be included in any written report and shall be provided to the

supervisor as necessary and appropriate. District complaint procedures are available upon request.

- It is understood that this SELPA Policy is superceded by any approved district policy.

Interagency responsibilities:

- It is understood that Regional Center, Department of Mental Health, and/or California Children Services may have specific needs to observe children at school. These guidelines are in addition to any such guidelines contained in the interagency agreement with each agency. School districts shall collaborate to assure that the observation is completed within the guidelines and within a reasonable period of time from the original request.
- All concerns at a given school shall be referred to the District Director of Special Education. Any concerns of a given district shall be referred to the SELPA Director.
- To the maximum extent possible, agencies are asked to obtain required observational information from opportunities outside the school program and school environment.